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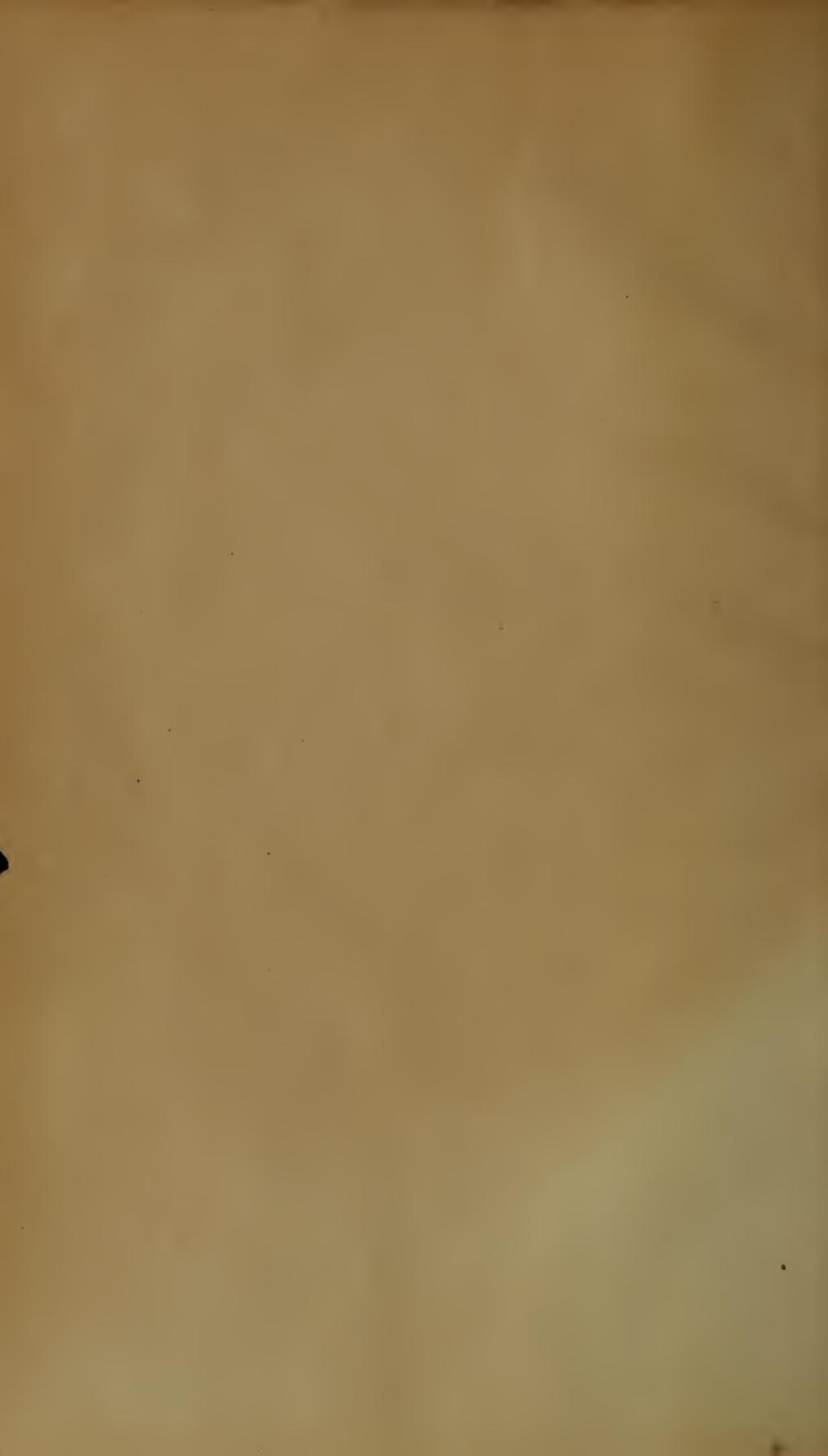
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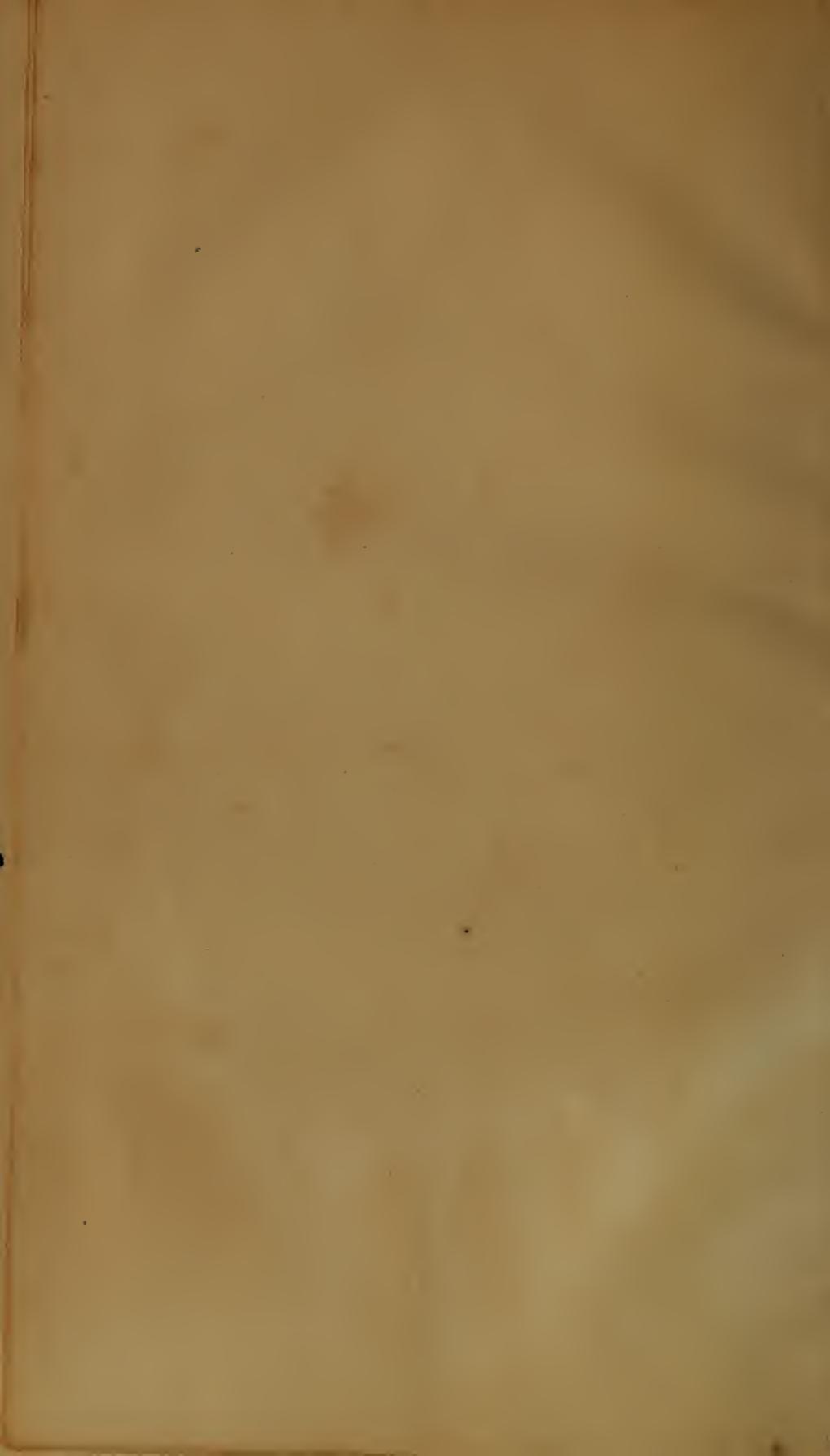












A

CHRISTIAN DESCRIBED,  
AND HIS RIGHT  
PROVED AND VINDICATED;

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF

A SERMON

PREACHED FROM

Job, xxxiv. 6.—“*Should I lie against my right?*”

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BY JAMES OSBOURN, V. D. M.

*Author of “Good Things Aimed at, or Divine Truths Touched on.”*

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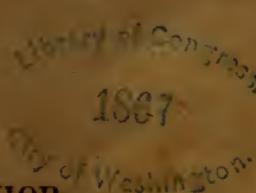
“*Be instant in season, out of season.*”—PAUL.

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# DEDICATION.

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE  
*THIRD BAPTIST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN BALTIMORE.*

Beloved in the Lord! Grace, mercy and peace be with you all. **AMEN.**

You are here presented with a small treatise, being the substance of a sermon which I some months ago delivered from the pulpit in your hearing. How much truth there is in it, and how well many parts of it may agree with Christian experience, I shall leave you to decide. I know however, it is *truth* which God will own and honour, and not *error* though it be embellished with the pomp of diction.

Beloved, I sincerely wish that the Lord may bless the reading of this sermon to your souls; as my end in writing and publishing the same will then be answered.

I think I can say with the apostle Paul, *I seek not yours but you.* And it does me good to find you walking in truth, and in love one to another. Continue so to do my beloved, and the God of peace be with you. You see and hear what broils and commotions there are in churches hither and thither. And O! that you may learn from these things the *sterling* value of gospel harmony, peace and love, among yourselves.

Pride is the door by which this train of evils creep in at; nor need we go far to prove this melancholy

fact. Watch against pride brethren; bear your testimony against it; yea, wage war with it, and oppose it wherever you see it; and may God grant you success. Consider your near relation to Christ the great head of the church, and your *elder brother who was born for adversity*. Humility was a very prominent trait in his character; and believe me when I say, humility is the bright ornament of every station in life; and how ought it to shine in the followers of the Lamb of God? A child-like spirit, meek and well weaned from the world, and its fascinating charms, is, in my opinion, a good symptom of a gracious heart. The heart of man is naturally haughty, and when this feature subsides, and humility succeeds it, we are lead to admire the change. It must be admitted, however, that this change may be produced by something short of *special grace*. But if this change be effected, and the mind, which before was altogether worldly and carnal, is drawn out to God; then it is that we are warranted to bring in a favourable verdict. Pray to be kept humble, and in the fear of God, my beloved; and when in trouble, patiently hope and wait till God sees fit to bring you out, as he did Job. God's time is always the best time, whether we know it or not. Believe this brethren, and act accordingly.

Again.—If you would be kept in a right frame of mind in the hour of trial, you ought first to wrestle with God in prayer. And if he sees fit to exercise you with long and sore afflictions, you may depend on him, that as your days, so your strength shall be. And often is it seen, that he makes the issue

of our trials much better than our fears suggested. Was it not so, I ask, in the case of Job? If God seems deaf to your prayers when in the greatest distress, be not discouraged; he may, and he often does stand behind our wall to exercise our patience, and to call for our opportunity in prayer. If you are cast into a sea of afflictions, as Job was, you may venture, though with a trembling heart, to claim the Lord as your God, as your Saviour. And encouraged you most assuredly are, with fervent cries, and humble expostulations to pour out your complaints into his bosom.

Endeavour, beloved, to live in continual fellowship with Christ, who is our life—and in strains of sublime adoration, extol this *Great Ancient of days!* And as you are admitted to the true fold, in songs ever fresh, publish the glories of his grace, and the wonders of his redeeming love, mercy, power, holiness and majesty. Yea, rejoice that his kingdom has been, is now, and will be established in the world; and that the day is coming when Satan shall be bound, and all the kingdoms on earth subjected to the righteous and merciful government of our Redeemer, Prophet, Priest, King, and God.

Beloved, as it is not my intention to *eat the bread of idleness*, as too many do, you may expect another visit from me by the time you have read and properly digested this; as *all things are now ready*, or nearly so. And until then, grace and peace be multiplied unto you through Jesus Christ our Lord.—AMEN.

J. O.

*Baltimore, September, 1820.*



## A CHRISTIAN DESCRIBED,

AND HIS RIGHT

## PROVED AND VINDICATED.

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*"Should I lie against my right?"—JOB, xxxiv. 6.*

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JOB in his day was certainly a very singular character, so much so, that there was none like him in the earth according to the Lord's account of him. "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"—JOB, i. 8. Although this was Job's character, he was not exempt from trouble, but met with it in great abundance. How afflicting was his situation, when the reproaches of men, and the frowns of God met upon him; and with what keen regret did he look back on the days of his prosperity, when he abounded in wealth, in popularity, and enjoyed the esteem and friendship of all around him! Had he not been taught that human life, with all its vicissitudes, crosses and comforts, is bounded by the wise decree of God, he would have sunk into despair, instead of saying "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

When in prosperity, he was courted, extolled, admired, caressed and almost worshipped by all classes of men. But when adversity overtook him, he was forsaken by them. Even his servants treated him with scorn, and *he was as one mocked of his*

*neighbour.* The few who pretended to be his friends, and who came to condole with him, did not understand his case but treated him as a hypocrite; therefore he might well say of them *Miserable comforters are ye all.* Young Elihu, among the rest, accused him of charging God with injustice, by saying “For Job hath said, I am righteous, and God hath taken away my judgment; should I lie against my right?” But whether he ever said this, we have no further proof than Elihu’s saying so. But as it is generally thought Moses wrote this book, we must conclude the sacred penman was acquainted with the fact; and if he did, it goes to show that he was resolved, notwithstanding all the heavy charges, and base aspersions heaped upon him by pretended friends, to maintain his integrity, and not lie against what he believed to be his right.

I think there can be no manner of doubt whatever, but that Job was, in many instances, wrongfully accused by men who were strangers to that deep distress into which he was plunged. Not that we can admit his misery to be an excuse for him wherein he acted wrong, and said what he ought not. And true enough it is, that he, when in the depth of trouble and anguish of soul, said many perverse things; and the best of us, if left to ourselves may, nay, we shall fall into the greatest folly and guilt; become mad in our wishes, and unthankful to God; and it is equally as true, that Job was the subject of Satan’s malice and rage, but it is admirable to see with what precision the limits of his malice were marked by an infinite God.

Divine sovereignty, ever wise and ever just, hath fixed the time, means and manner of correct-

ing the children of men; afflictions are not sent in vain, nor yet at random, but to answer some wise design of HIM who sends them. And this was, no doubt, the end God had in view in trying Job as he did. Nor was it right by any means for him to complain and murmur as he did at times. To quarrel with the life which God bestows, is to sin against our own mercies. Fretfulness and impatience at our lot can only aggravate our sufferings; and to reflect on providence, is to accuse God, and to charge him with want of wisdom; and it is quite Atheistical to think that any thing happens to us by chance; Job himself, who at times found so much fault with God's dealings with him in providence could, and did say once, "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground."—JOB, v. 6. And that which renders our complaining under troubles and afflictions inexcusable is, we have not only a God of deep counsels and unsearchable perfections to deal with, but, in providence, have a mixture of undeserved mercy in the most severe afflictions we meet with by the way.

The biography of Job is calculated to produce a medley of feelings in the breast of every attentive reader. Permit me, my brethren, to run over, in order, the ground which this Eastern sage trod.

We first behold him in affluent circumstances, surrounded on every hand with creature comforts. Ten children, like olive plants, were round about his table, and men and maid servants in great abundance. On his plantation he had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses; and to crown all, he was in possession of true

peace and the fear of God. Thus lived in the land of Ur, *the greatest man of all the men of the East*, and his name was Job.

We next behold this pious man devoutly offering up to his God “burnt offerings according to the number of his children,” and Satan violently opposing him in this good work. And a very restless spirit he manifested until he saw the crown of greatness fall from the head of Job. While on the pinnacle of fame we find the aged and the youth, the princes and the nobles, unanimously agreeing to pay him all that deference which his rank called for. We are told “the aged arose and stood up;” I suppose to do him reverence; “the youth blushed when before him; the princes refrained from talking, and laid their hand on their mouth,” when in his company; “the nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth,” when occasion required for Job to speak.

But O! how short-lived are creature comforts and worldly greatness, my brethren; they die as soon as born, and go out like a torch at noon; and so here, in one moment, as it were, we with amazement behold a man of God sinking! sinking into the most abject state, and soon became as wretched as before he was opulent. By a powerful east wind his eldest son’s house sustained so tremendous a concussion, that it fell, and great was the fall thereof, for in the ruins were his sons and daughters buried. His five hundred she asses, and his five hundred yoke of oxen were stolen, and his servants slain by the Sabeans. His seven thousand sheep were all burnt to death by the fire of God, which fell from heaven, and his three

thousand camels were carried away by the Chaldeans; and notwithstanding all this, we hear the pious man say, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

But that we might know that Job was a man of like passions with us, and when left to himself his lips would utter perverseness, we next hear him in the bitterness of his soul thus exclaim, "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, there is a man child conceived," &c.

In this distressed state, those who had been his familiars, forsook him and fled, forgetting that "to him who is afflicted, pity should be shewed from his friend." Here again we hear him thus complain, "My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the streams of brooks they pass away; my kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me; they that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger; I am an alien in their sight."

At last we find God turned again the captivity of Job and gave him twice as much as he had before. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning; and in peace he died, being old and full of days; and his immortal part, which God took special care of through all his troubles, and dislodged it at last from the tenement of cumbersome clay, is now in undisturbed repose, covered with immortal glory, and so will remain through *vast eternity*.

I will now proceed, by divine assistance, to offer you my thoughts on the passage, in the manner and order following, viz:—

FIRST. I will describe a Christian.

SECONDLY. Endeavour to prove his right, and vindicate it.

THIRDLY. Show the ground on which his right is founded.

FOURTHLY. Speak particularly to the question, “*Should I lie against my right?*”

FIRST. A Christian, in the genuine sense of the word, is one who has been *delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son*. He is one who, by a special act of sovereign grace, has passed from death unto life; and now loves the brethren, and God who first loved him. His heart is right with God, having undergone a radical change. In his heart Christ is formed the hope of glory. Sin, and the service of Satan he now hates, while to Jesus he cleaves, with full purpose of heart. He flies from the law as a covenant of works, and builds his hope of life and salvation on Jesus Christ, the rock of eternal ages. He comes out from the world, separates himself from his former wicked companions, and joins with the household of faith. Of Christ, he speaks in the most exalted terms; and of himself, as the chief of sinners. His own righteousness he views as *filthy rags*; yea, *as dung and dross*, while the righteousness of his Saviour is his boast, and of it he makes honourable mention all the day long. He is sensible of his own weakness and insufficiency; he therefore looks, by faith, to Jesus, who is his wisdom and strength. He is in love with truth, and closely adheres to it. He takes it for his shield and buckler, for he knows it was by the truth he was made free.

Again—a true Christian is a spiritual soldier; and as he has enlisted in the best of causes, he is willing to endure hardship, and fight manfully under the banner of Jesus, his king and captain. He, in the strength of his glorious king, wages war against his old master, the Devil; against the world, sin, and the corruptions of his own wicked heart; and he fondly hopes, (and on a good foundation too) that victory will declare herself on his side, to the everlasting honour of his captain. His struggles, however, are at times great; and victory, notwithstanding his courage, and soldier-like boldness, frequently seems to hang in doubtful scale. In the heat of this contest he endeavours to keep his eye fixed on his captain; watches closely all his motions; attends to his commands; and endeavours to follow where he leads. If at any time he loses sight of his leader, and cannot hear his voice, he begins to think his case desperate, and wonders where the scene will end; his foes now fiercely assault him on every side. The enemy well knowing the situation he is in, and the trembling that is come upon him, call up all their reinforcements, and exert all their power, while they become truly outrageous; the Christian seeing their movements, knowing well their object, and being sensible that he cannot help himself, to go back would be disloyal, to stand still dangerous, to go forward and meet the enemy, without his commanding officer, would be hazardous and presumptuous in the extreme; and, in fact, impracticable. Finding, therefore, no alternative but that of crying aloud for aid from his Lord and Master, he cries out, "Lord save, or I perish!" The Lord, who all this time had his eye fixed on him,

beholds his situation, hears his cry, flies to his relief, scatters his enemies, makes his path streight, and gives him fresh strength to pursue his journey. The Christian then goes on his way rejoicing in his God, and on his way sings this song, "I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength, and my song, he also is become my salvation."

Again—as he is a Christian, and a Christian soldier too, he is considered a proper mark for all the enemies of righteousness to shoot at; he therefore becomes the butt of their rage and fury; and as they are levelling their artillery at the green tree under the shadow of which the Christian is come to trust, so will they also at the dry tree, and endeavor to destroy him root and branch; and many encounters will he have with them, but over them all he at last shall be made a conqueror. But he will have constantly to look to his divine leader and helper, and to put his whole trust in him. To prove that he is not of the world, he will come out from it, stamp vanity on all its vain charms, and seek to live a life of faith on the Son of God. As a Christian, he will delight to set at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him. He will rejoice when in his presence, and sadly mourn when he is absent. He will endeavour to walk humbly with his God, and circumspectly before him; like the Apostle, he will strive to keep a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man. He will acknowledge Christ to be his best friend, and only saviour, and show his attachment to him by following him wherever he leads.

Again, a Christian is an object of immortal love; a partaker of divine grace; an heir of God

in union with Christ the living vine, under the tuition of the Holy Ghost, clothed with the best robe. A fellow citizen with the saints; with them his name is enroled in the book of life, and heaven is waiting for his triumphant arrival, when angels will welcome him home with shouts of loud applause! A foretaste of these things makes him long to be there, and crucifies him to this world; yet he is willing to wait the good pleasure of his God, and endure hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, for he knows his trials must be short, though they may be fierce and sharp, but heaven will make amends for all.

Once more—a Christian is a wise man, being influenced by that wisdom which cometh from above. He knows himself; he knows God through Jesus the Son; he knows the truth, and loves it; he knows the worth of his immortal soul, and that sin is calculated to destroy it, therefore he shuns it as he would the deadliest poison; he knows that afflictions, painful as they are, or may be, are all working together for his good; and his sufferings for Christ here will but render him more like his Divine Master, and endear him more and more unto him, so that he is not unwilling to suffer for Christ's sake; consequently he knows the value of Christ, and esteems him the altogether lovely, and is for a special application of him to himself. As he is desirous of knowing more of Christ under the consideration of a Saviour, so also is he free to own him as a Lord, and as his own sovereign Lord in particular. He is also a fearful man, (not in the sense the wicked are, for they are afraid, and flee when none pursueth) he is afraid to sin, knowing it is hateful in the sight of HIM whom his

soul loveth; therefore he often says within himself, “*How shall I do this great evil, and sin against God?*” He is afraid of the world, knowing that it is full of sins and snares very alarming, and eminently calculated to divert the mind and lead it away from God the chief good. He well knows it always was, and ever will be unfriendly to the subject of Divine Grace; therefore he endeavors as much as in him lies, to live as retired from it as possible, to taste not, handle not, and touch not, more than is absolutely necessary for his easy and honourable passage through it. He is likewise afraid of himself, having been taught, by the unerring spirit of truth, that his heart is not to be trusted, “it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,” so that he cannot direct his own steps, neither of himself think a good thought, much less do a good act. Hence he frequently cries out, “*O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*” He is also afraid of ERROR, knowing that it is very insinuating; smooth and gentle in its approach; very flattering to proud human nature; always speaking peace, and good things to it; for error is the production of human wisdom, and always stands opposed to sovereign, free, discriminating GRACE. The Christian, therefore, endeavors to shun it under all its gaudy trappings, and he earnestly prays to be preserved continually from the infatuating smiles and approaches of ERROR.

The Christian is also an humble man, he wishes to be kept low in the vale of humility, knowing that humility is the direct road to honour, not worldly honour, but that which cometh from God, heavenly honour; and he knows that the space

between humility and pride is much narrower than most men are aware of, and this he can clearly see in many persons, who, because they are not humble, are lifted up with pride, and are known afar off by the Lord; but *he dwelleth with the humble.*

Again—the Christian is a *praying* man, prayer is the breath of his soul. As a man cannot live without breathing, so a Christian cannot live without prayer. Without prayer he would stand as a cypher in the camp of Israel; for if he could not pray, he could not fight, therefore he would not be of any use there. Prayer is as a maul on the head of his enemy, and as a mill-stone tied round the neck of his lusts; nor does he go to prayer as an ox goeth to the yoke, but he goes with pleasure and delight; it is his meat and drink, the very element in which he delights to dwell, therefore he goes again and again, and the more he frequents the throne of grace, the more he wants to be there. The spirit also helps his infirmities, and indites his petitions, so that it may truly be said, *he prays with the spirit and with the understanding also;* it is by prayer he makes all his requests known to God; when under afflictions, temptations, and sore trials, he gives himself unto prayer, and cries mightily to God; to God he goes with all his grievances, and looks to him for redress, knowing that none but God can deliver him out of his distress, so that if God heap trials and afflictions upon him, he will heap prayer upon God, and lay all his complaints before him, while he fondly hopes to prove successful in the end. “And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long

with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.”—LUKE, xviii. 7. 8. But he not only prays for himself, but recollecting the hole of the pit from which he was digged, he feels for those who are in the same situation in which he once was; he, therefore, prays for sinners, *that the God of all grace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ,* would be graciously pleased to turn them from the error of their ways unto the wisdom of the just. But in an especial manner does he feel engaged for the Israel of God. Zion’s welfare lies near his heart, therefore he is prompted to pray for her prosperity and enlargement; he rejoices when he sees her cords lengthened, her stakes strengthened, and her curtains stretched forth. “Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice with joy for her, all ye that mourn for her.”—ISA. lxvi. 10. Zion is the place of his abode; the saints are his companions, and the objects of his delight; he would sooner his right hand should forget its cunning than he should forget Jerusalem; or his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth, than cease to pray for the household of faith.

Again—a Christian is an obedient man; he obeys from the heart, and looks upon the performance of duty as a recreation rather than a task; and answers as cheerfully to that call as if he were bid to eat or drink, for he knows God does not approve of sadness in spiritual sacrifices, by his forbidding *leaven* under the law; and that he loveth cheerfulness in worship, by his requiring wine and oil. He also obeys with reverence and holy fear, and yet with great speed. He runs in the way of God’s commands; makes haste, and de-

lays not; if God says, "seek ye my face," his heart immediately replies, "thy face Lord will I seek." His obedience also proceeds from a spirit of Evangelical faith, and hence his obedience is the obedience of faith. In the performance of duty he endeavours to be very exact, regarding every circumstance, however small, as well as the more substantial parts thereof. In short, to do the will of his divine Lord and Master is his meat and drink; not that he can feed on duties, but he can live in them, and feed on Christ the bread of life, the hidden manna, while he is attending to them. It is this that sweetens duty and makes it delightsome.

He is also a man of discernment. He can distinguish between law and gospel, truth and error; between the slavery of sin and Satan, and the liberty of the sons of God; between the power of darkness in which he was once held, and the kingdom of God's dear Son, into which he has been translated. He can see and feel the difference between the demands of the law, and the sweet soul-comforting voice of his beloved; between the law in his members and the law of his mind. Yes, and he can see something of the stability of the covenant of grace, with whom it was made, [CHRIST] and on whose behalf, [THE ELECT] and also their security, from which he justly concludes, God can never forego his promise, or forfeit his oath. He sees that God is well pleased with what Christ has done for his church; that law and justice is satisfied; a way is now opened to God the Father for poor sinners, and that Christ is the way, the only way to God; yea, the way, the truth and the life. Here he discov-

ers that all the attributes of Deity harmonize; sinners are saved with an everlasting salvation, without producing a jarring note among them. Again, he can discern something of the signs of the times; and from what he sees, is constrained to acknowledge that there are but few possessors of this grace of God, (comparatively speaking) among the vast multitude of professors of religion; and that pride, popularity, and conformity to the world, are the most prominent features among Christians. He also sees that the fine gold of the gospel has become dim, and the church of Christ at a low estate; he not only sees and believes this to be the case, but he mourns on account of it, and the more so as he fears it will be worse before it is better.

But though he believes this to be the case; yet he evidently sees, that the commotion now in the world and in the church, can never derange or jostle out of its place the smallest part of that incomparable gospel scheme, which is the result of Infinite wisdom; the adjustment of which, reflects such effulgent glory on him who hath *done all things well*. He moreover is taught by reading the sacred volume of inspiration, that all the purposes of God, must and will have their accomplishment at the times appointed by the Father, and not one single vessel of mercy shall ever be dashed in pieces, or deluged by eternal wrath for the want of means to bring him to a right knowledge of the truth, and to preserve him unto the end after he has known the same.

Here also he learns, that a man is cut off from divine acceptance upon the footing of good works, however conscientiously performed; that salvation

is of grace—of pure grace without any mixture of works on our part; that the glory of all may redound to him who hath “remembered us in our low estate, and whose mercy endureth forever.—He can contemplate the providence of God with pleasure, while he considers that all its parts and branches, ebbings and flowings, are under the wise controul of him *who upholdeth all things by the word of his power.* And notwithstanding every opening leaf thereof be marked with wars and tumults, blood and rapine, foreign invasion and domestic broils, which seem to threaten destruction to the Godly, and total ruin to Zion—yet in his eternal mind there is an exact uniformity; and that all cannot fail to terminate in the welfare of the church and his glory. “For the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath shall he restrain;” from which the Christian is taught, that it is his duty to submit to all the vicissitudes incident to this mortal state of things; and to acknowledge God just and right in all his ways. This he desires to do, and finds an inward satisfaction from his becoming submissive.

Once more.—A Christian is a bold and persevering man. The approbation of God, and the testimony of a good conscience, make him bold and courageous for God, when others are silent or flee away. “The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are as bold as a lion.”—Prov. xxviii. 1. He is bold for the truth, and will contend earnestly for it, even when its pretended friends are afraid and ashamed to acknowledge it. Yea, he will boldly contend for the whole truth as far as it is made known to him, and endeavour to set it forth with clearness, while many

of its seeming votaries, mince and mutilate it for fear of consequences. This boldness which is governed by the scriptures, leads him fearlessly to contend, that the atonement made by Christ on Calvary's cross, and its application is to all intents and purposes of equal extent; and that *universal atonement, but special in its application*, is universal nonsense as the word of God abundantly teaches, and which every discerning Christian may see. He will persevere in thus boldly standing up for the truth; though he should get a bad name for so doing, for truth is more dear to him than a good name among empty professors. Yes, he will persevere unto the end, and at last receive a crown of life, for he is a partaker of the divine nature, which is unchangeable. Besides, he is declared to be blessed with *all spiritual blessings* in Christ Jesus, and perseverance must be *one of all* these blessings which are spiritual and secured to him in Christ Jesus. But to conclude, he will, in the strength promised, endure unto the end, in the face of all opposition, for it is said, "thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days so shall thy strength be.—Deut. xxxiii. 25.

I have thus, my brethren, endeavoured to describe the Christian; and, perhaps, you are ready to say you often feel very different from the description given; and indeed, so you may, and yet be Christians. A Christian is a complex character; and to do him justice, he should be set forth as such, which is what I intend to do before I dismiss the subject. But I now proceed,

**SECONDLY.** To prove what his right is, and vindicate it.

Inasmuch as God has been pleased, in mercy,

to raise him to newness of life, in Christ Jesus, and enabled him to wrestle with great wrestling for the promised blessing; and he having prevailed with his God, he has a just right to subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel; and should Satan put a negative upon it, and try to beat him off, and wrest his right from him by suggesting many things against so daring an attempt, yet he has a right to persist in his holy resolution, since he has received a special grant from God to do so; and not only so, but if he should be boldly withheld, and waylaid by the great seducer of souls, he has a right to resist him, and insist on his claim to all the privileges and blessings of the spiritual Israel of God; and the stronger the opposition is, the greater should be his boldness in maintaining his right; and the many blessings which belong to him as a spiritual Israelite, and an object of God's choice. It is not his province to hold a parley here with his accuser about his right, nor consult flesh and blood, or carnal reason; for it is before him, and he should go in and possess the land, and return God thanks for the great favour conferred on him. If he loiters by the way, and endeavours to determine his right, by his own feelings, or what Satan may say, his difficulties will perhaps swell to a great magnitude. He should, therefore, enter immediately into the gospel rest, which is his right, and say in the open face of all his enemies, "I have found him whom my soul loveth."

As he has a right to subscribe himself a spiritual Israelite, so he has a right to expect Israel's God will own him—will defend him—will supply all his wants—will deliver him from his en-

mies both bodily and ghostly, and be his exceeding great reward. On the other hand, he has a right, an undoubted right to rest on God—hope in him—look to him—seek after him, and rejoice in him.

Being a partaker of divine grace, in favour with God; his sins pardoned, and peace proclaimed; he has an indisputable right to go to a throne of grace, and to expect what is there to be obtained, viz. *Mercy and grace*. As then, he has a right to come to a throne of grace, so he has a right to come *boldly* and under all *circumstances* too. Boldly, that is, he hath a right to come in all the confidence of faith; to come with an expectation of being heard and answered; to come as though he was coming to a God full of grace and truth; to come believing that God delighted in his coming; to come without shyness; without fear of miscarrying; without doubting, or calling in question his heavenly Father's goodness. To come, empty, naked, and bare as he is; without expecting to meet with divine regard upon the ground of any thing he may have done or can do. To come in the name of Jesus the only Saviour of sinners; and plead his worth, his merit, as the only ground of acceptance with God. To come in downright earnest, as if he was deeply engaged in the business on which he is come, and as though he would not take nay as an answer, or be put off with any thing short of that which he is in pursuit of, and though his whole heart was wrapped up in it.

Again—he must come, not only boldly, but under *all circumstances*. He may at times be much beclouded, benighted, and confused in his

mind, and no small tempest lying upon him, together with many fears and doubts pressing hard upon his soul, so that he may not be able to see things as plainly as he once did. But though circumstanced thus, he has still a right to come to a throne of grace, there to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in this time of great need; yea, he should come the more frequently, and cry more loudly and earnestly. Times of darkness and affliction should be praying times; and where should a benighted, afflicted, and praying soul be found but at a throne of grace, which is his right? He may also be much put to it by Satan, who may try to step up his path, throw many obstacles in his way, and labour hard to keep him from his right. But the Christian should claim it as his privilege, and then come, let Satan say what he may against it; and when is there greater need for the Christian to maintain his right than when thus circumstanced?

Again—he may, at times, contract guilt upon his conscience; sin may lie heavy on his soul, and he be sorely oppressed on that account, at which time he will find it hard work to do what he has a right to do, namely, to come *boldly* to a throne of grace. But though all this be the case, his right is not cut off, nor is he prohibited, on God's part, from claiming his right, or from coming *boldly* to a throne of grace. Again—God may seem to frown, chide, and stand aloof, which indeed is a sore affliction, and hard to be borne; yet the Christian ought not so far to be discouraged as to give up his right, as God intends no such thing by it; the Christian ought not to draw any such conclusion, but still claim his right, and go *boldly* to a throne

of grace, and cry aloud to God, and say, “*Why standest thou afar off, O God; why hidest thou thy face in times of trouble?*” This is, indeed, a time of trouble with the Christian, but it is not a time for him to despair; for although God sometimes seems to stand aloof, he never says, “I have taken away thy right, therefore it is in vain for thee to come again.” When God says so, it will be time enough to give up resorting to a throne of grace. But until then, he has a right to *hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, and to his saints.* But again—the Christian may not enjoy as much of God at a throne of grace as he once did; nor receive such direct answers from him as heretofore. Now, this is another circumstance which is very trying; but he is not warranted to give up his right, but still to claim it, seeing God has said, “*Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.*” He then has a right to come *boldly* to a throne of grace, and say, “Will not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?”

Again—as the Christian is an heir of promise, he has a right to all the promises which are *in Christ yea, and in him, amen, to the glory of God the Father.* He may therefore, with confidence, lay hold of the promises, and draw from them all that divine comfort and consolation which they are so eminently calculated to afford. If they speak peace, they speak it to him, for they are his by right. If they speak of a Saviour, good and kind, they speak so to him, for they are his right. If they are unconditional, he has a right to take them as such, and not mix conditions with them, for they are his in the form they are delivered to him. If

they are faithful and true, and are to have their accomplishment in the experience of Christians, he should receive them as such, for they are his right. If they are acceptable words, and words that are to be pleaded by the saints of God, he should turn unto the Lord, and plead them before him, and look for their fulfilment in him, for they are his right. If they hold out strength to the saints of God, sufficient to their day, he should embrace them as such, and look for the promised strength, for they are his right. If they are breasts of consolation to the followers of the Lamb of God, then it is his duty, his high privilege to press them, to suck them, to call them his own, for they are his right. And if it be so, that the promises of God, are the Christian's right, how rich is he, how well provided for, how highly honoured, for how many great and precious promises has he to call his own, and to fly unto in times of temptation and distress?

These promises are all like so many notes, issued from the great bank of heaven; they all bear the chief Manager's signature and broad seal. And as these notes are his, he has a right in course to trade, or do business at this bank. Whenever poverty pinches him sorely, and his funds are low, he can go and spread his case before the managers, and draw for the amount he stands in need of. And indeed it is amazing to what a large amount he sometimes draws; but as he has a right to do it, it is all taken well, his credit is good, for he has a surety in the person of one of the managers; therefore the request of his lips is granted him. And as he never refunds half what he gets, he consequently is, and will be in a long run,

deeply in arrears to the bank, and under the greatest obligations to it—yet it is looked over, for the managers know very well that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, so they take the will for the deed, and are much more out with him for not drawing more, than they are for his drawing too much; for it is considered an honour to the bank to be drawn largely on by those who have a right to do so. Now the Christian knowing all this he at times makes very free and opens his mouth wide; knowing there is no danger of a failure on the part of the bank. Though it is true the bank sometimes for a few days, puts off the payment of its notes, owing chiefly to the manner in which they are presented, for the managers have their rules laid down, from which they do not like to deviate, knowing such a procedure would tend to breed discord among the claimants and look like instability in the bank. Although this is the case, the Christian knows that all the promises are good and every note will fetch its real value, sometime hereafter. Therefore, as soon as he gets one, off he goes to the bank, but frequently owing to the awkward manner of his presenting it, he has to call again, and in the interval between the time he first presents it, until it is accepted and paid, he turns it over and over in his mind, looks at it in various ways, and frequently consults others upon the subject; by some he is advised to let it rest for the present as it is; by others he is advised to go again and again, to lose no time, nor take any rest until he succeeds; this last advice best suiting his own views of the subject, he does so, and tries the bank, day and night (for the bank is never shut) until the thing comes all right at last, and a very

high encomium is passed upon him for his courage, "O man! great is thy faith."

No business is so lucrative as this in which the Christian is engaged—no employ so honourable—no trade so permanent—no bank of so long and good standing as this—its notes are current in all the streets of Zion, and well known by every Christian throughout the king's realm. O! how highly is the Christian favoured, to have a right to all the promises, and a right to plead them before the maker and giver of them.

Again—not only the promises, but Christ Jesus, in whom they all centre, is the Christian's right also; Christ and the Christian are one, he is Christ's and Christ is his. This being the case, he has a right to cast all his burden on Christ—what is his burden? sin; well, he has a right to roll his sins upon him. Christ is a *rock*, on which he has a right to build all his hopes of life and eternal glory. Christ is a *shepherd*, to whom he has a right to fly for shelter and constant supply; saying "the Lord is my shepherd I shall not want." Christ is the infallible *physician*, to him he has a right to go with all his wounds, and complicated sickness and find a cure. Christ is the *gate* of life, the *door* of hope, at which he may freely knock, enter in, and go in and out and find pasture. Christ is the spiritual *apple tree*, under whose shadow he has a right to set down, and freely feed upon the precious fruit thereof. Christ is a *king*, and he is a king's son, and one of his royal subjects. As such, he may claim his protection, draw near to his sacred person, and feast with confidence at his royal table. Christ is a *priest*, even the great high priest, who made full atone-

ment for all his sins; as such, therefore, he may claim him and rejoice in his sacrifice. Christ is a *prophet*, to whom he has a right to apply for divine instruction; should Satan say (as he is very fond of doing) in order to discourage the poor Christian—"Thou art a fool, thou art a very sorry fellow, and dost not know right from wrong." In reply he may say "Christ is my wisdom, and kind instructor, my cause must therefore end well." Again says Satan, "Thou art a sinner, all polluted and defiled." The Christian may reply—"I know all this Satan; but Christ is my righteousness and strength, in whom is all my hope." But the enemy continues—"Thou art unholy, and in no way fit to enter into heaven; for no unholy person shall enter there and thou canst not make thyself better." "Yes," says the child of grace, "all this is true, I know it to be the case, but Christ Jesus is my sanctification, and has engaged in covenant to purify me unto himself, and at last present me before the sacred throne without spot." And should Satan persevere and add, "But thou art greatly fallen, and sunk very low, thou canst not help thyself; God is offended with thee, for thou hast broken his law, and trampled his authority under thy feet, and nothing that thou canst do will countervale his damage." The Christian in reply, has solid ground to go upon, and may say, "This is also true, but it is equally true, that Christ, who is my right, is a healer of breaches; who is also my redemption, as well as my wisdom, righteousness and sanctification. I will therefore rest upon him, and glory in him."

Thus, as Christ is his right, he has a right to make use of him on all occasions, and to meet Sa-

tan's objections by claiming his right to Christ, and interest in him, and by so doing, he will honour Christ, and he that thus honoureth Christ, Christ will honour also. Moreover, as Christ is his right, every communicable blessing, which is in, and flows from him, is his right also. Nothing that is needful for him shall be withheld. If he stands in need of continual supplies of grace, it shall be granted to him, it being his right. If he need the Holy Spirit to guide him into all truth, it shall be given him, for he is promised to all those who ask for him. If he need the refreshing showers of rain from the everlasting hills, to cheer his fainting soul, they shall in due time, be sent. If he need repeated pledges of Christ's love to him, in order to his peace and comfort, he shall receive them, and that freely too. In short, all that Christ has, is his right, and no good thing will be withheld from him; hence it is the Christian's unbounded duty to serve him cheerfully, to love him fervently, to honour him constantly, to speak highly of him at all times, and in all places, and to recommend him earnestly to all who feel their need of a Saviour.

Christ Jesus is the fountain of all good, and as he is the Christian's right, all good things, (it follows irresistably) belong to him. Surely then, it well becomes the Christian, to give the Saviour his whole heart and service; for as he has a right to so much, he is in duty bound to refund as much as possible. As he freely receives, he should freely give. As Christ sought and found him, he ought to seek and worship Christ. As Christ suffered greatly for him, he ought willingly to suffer for Christ. As Christ humbled himself for

him, he ought to show a readiness to become any thing for Christ, and count his right to Christ greater honour than the glory of this world. As Christ died on the cross for him, he should glory in nothing, save the cross of Christ, and to say, "The ransom of my life, which is Christ Jesus, is my riches, and being made rich by his poverty, of my riches I will boast all the day long."

The gospel, with all its dainties, all its privileges, yea, the new and everlasting covenant, with all it contains, he has a right to; even now and forever more. But to proceed:—

In the next place—as the Christian has a right to Christ, the head of the church, and all that is in him, and flows from him, so also has he a right to the love and affection of all the saints composing his church. Do the saints love one another? Yes, they do; or at least they ought to do so, as they are exhorted to it, "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." 1 Peter, i. 22. And this love is to be without dissimulation or disguise; hence says Paul, "Let love be without dissimulation." Rom. xiii. 9. So also should it be durable, or continue, as says the same Apostle, "Let brotherly love continue." Heb. xii. 1. Indeed, love to the brethren, is spoken of as a mark of grace; as we read, "we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." 1 John, iii. 14. They are to *forsake one another in love, and by love serve one another.* They are also exhorted to *love the brotherhood, and to be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; in honour, preferring one another.* And Christ says, *by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have*

*love one to another.*"—JOHN, xiii. 35. Now to this love of the brethren the Christian has a right, because he is one of the brethren; and he has a right to it at all times, (as long as he gives evidence of his sonship.) In adversity, when providence seems to frown, and God hides his face, he has a right to the love and affection of the household of faith, and in an especial manner ought it to be expressed toward him at this time. Again, when labouring under affliction, either of body, mind, or in his family, or all together, as is frequently the case; surely under these circumstances the love and esteem of the saints should flow to him, and not the least abatement be experienced by him, but contrarywise, as Paul says, "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love, one to another; and again, wherefore I beseech you, that ye would confirm your love toward him."—1 THESS. iii. 12. 2 COR. ii. 8. How would the poor afflicted saint feel himself aggrieved were the brethren to withhold from him his right? He ought not to be coolly treated, or in any degree slighted by the brethren in the day of affliction and sorrow; for as his trials are great, he stands in great need of a clearer view of his right. When in affliction, pity and love, affectionately manifested by friends, are like cold water to a thirsty person; indeed, he has a right to expect them, and they also are in duty bound to confer them; not in word only, but in deed also. Moreover, the Christian has a right to their company and prayers, for they are exhorted to pray with and for one another, for which purpose they should often meet together, and engage in profitable conversation; they should solemnly talk of

what they know of divine truth; of the love of Christ shed abroad in their hearts; of the sweet answers they have received to their prayers; of what soul refreshing visits they have had from Jesus the heavenly lover, and how many unexpected and undeserved pledges of his goodness and loving kindness he has graciously favoured them with from time to time. What copious showers of divine grace he has poured out upon them, and what sealing witnesses of the Holy Spirit has been afforded them; what gracious deliverances have at times been wrought for them, and the snares of Satan broken by their Lord and Master; how many doubts and fears banished from their minds, and difficulties removed out of their way. They should also converse about their temptations, acknowledge their weakness and short comings before God; of their utter unworthiness of his favours; what debtors to amazing grace; what great obligations they are under to Almighty God for all the goodness, compassion, and tender mercy manifested to them in the course of their pilgrimage. Such conversation, and such company is truly profitable and heart cheering, and is what the poor dejected Christian, above spoken of, has a right to, nor ought the household of faith to deny it him. Christian company, if properly managed, far exceeds all other society in this unfriendly world; and such company is his due; for in such he delights, and they are deservedly the objects of his warmest love, and well they may be, for their interest is one; their final aim and object one; they have one father or parent; one common stock; members of the same divine family; all clothed alike; travelling the

same road; and have the same heavenly country in view; they all sing the same song, with no jarring note, viz:—"Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be all the glory and praise!" The Christian, by the enjoyment of his right, often gets his mind relieved from embarrassments and sore perplexities; Satan's temptations weakened, and his faith much strengthened, while he is encouraged to trust in his gracious God, and go on his way rejoicing. Ought he not then, to claim his right, and enjoy it?

But again—he has also a right to their prayers and supplications. Saints should pray with and for each other; "bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." If he is under sore trouble and grievous temptation, he has a right to expect the brethren will bear him on their minds at a throne of grace; and thus spread his case before the Lord who heareth and answereth prayer. Though all the household are not acquainted with his difficulties; nor even with him personally, yet he has a right to believe that he is remembered by them before God; for supplication and thanksgiving are daily offered up for all the children of Zion; so that there is a large stock of prayers put up for him from season to season; and as for those who are intimate with him, and know his situation; he has solid ground to calculate on their Christian sympathy; that they will advise with him; pray with him and for him, and do all in their power to promote his peace and comfort. Indeed what a blessed consideration, and high privilege it is, that the Christian can go with his budget of troubles to the dear saints of Jesus; cast them down before them, and unreservedly make

known the sorrows of his mind to them, especially as he knows they will condole with him, and bear a part with him. This reciprocity should always take place, for he has a right to demand it. While on the other hand, they have an equal right to confer it; and when done in a proper and becoming spirit, an unspeakable pleasure is the result to all concerned. *His* trouble is *their* trouble; *his* sorrow *their* sorrow; if one member is afflicted, the whole body suffers; he is to be borne on their sides, and gently dandled on their knees; and his case spread before the Lord by them. They struggle with him; wrestle for him; they labour for him to come forth; and watch and wait for his deliverance with as much anxiety as if it were their own case; and in God's time he will be brought through; their praying breath shall not be spent in vain; as God inclines their hearts to pray, so will he graciously incline his ear to hear. Perhaps it is *so* with him, that his mind is dark, and shut up; the good things of the kingdom of God taken away from him, while he is labouring under amazing fierce temptations, and *so* left in the hands of the enemy, that he is ready almost to despair of life, and all hope of his being saved, (as to sense) quite taken away; and then such an awful flood of Atheistical and Deistical thoughts inundate his soul, that, by way of prayer, he can do but little for himself. However, he has a right to calculate on much aid from those of the saints who know the state of his mind; he ought to expect that they will intercede for him, and that prayer and supplications will be made incessantly for him; nor shall the saints go unrewarded for it, for when God restores comfort unto him, they, (*his*

mourners) shall participate of his joy. This was the way in old times, as it is written, "I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners."—ISA. lvii. 18.

Furthermore—he has not only a right to their love and affection; to their company and prayers; but he has a right to their aid and assistance in a pecuniary sense, should he from adverse providence stand in need of it. If he is poor, and in indigent circumstances, through bereavements, afflictions, and losses, he has a right to expect they will exercise their liberality towards him, it is his right, and he should look for it. This was the case under the law, and much more should it prevail in these gospel times. "If there be among you a poor man, of one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates in thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, the seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee; thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him, because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy work, and all that thou putteth thy hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land, therefore I command thee saying, thou shalt open thine

hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in the land.”—DEUT. xv. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11.

Now we see brethren what was commanded under the law, and should not this commandment be in full force now among us? Yes, surely it should; as God whom we adore has given it, nor can it be evaded by us, and we remain innocent. James says, “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto him, depart in peace, be thou warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give him not those things which are needful for the body, what doth it profit?”—JAMES, ii. 15. 16. And surely the obligation is greater on us than on ancient Israel; for theirs was only a natural compact, cemented by the ties of consanguinity, ours a spiritual one. The moral precept which was binding on them, is binding on all men indiscriminately as belonging to the great family of mankind; but members of a church of Jesus Christ are called upon by every sacred principle to the discharge of this important, though too much neglected duty. This is as clearly the poor Christian’s right as any thing to which the gospel has given him a claim, and the household of faith act extremely wrong in withholding it from him, for it is easy for *many* to help *one*, and what is given in this way is only lent unto the Lord; and as the saints have freely received of the Lord in a way of providence, so should they freely give, especially as it is *his* right to whom it is given, and the Lord loves a cheerful giver. “The liberal soul is to devise liberal things, and by liberal things he is to stand.”—ISA. xxxii. 8. Paul, on this subject is bold, and calls the liberality of the saints a *grace*, thus, “See that ye abound in

this *grace* also."—**2 Cor. viii. 7.** Now, if this be a grace, surely the saints ought to be found in the exercise of it, and the Christian should claim his right boldly. But,

He also has a right to a name and a place in the house of the Lord, and to a participation of all the immunities and privileges which that house affords. **Is church-fellowship a blessing?** It is; well, he has a right to that blessing. The Lord, the great head of the church, has promised to meet with his people, when they convene together for solemn worship, to revive their souls, cheer their drooping spirits, strengthen their faith, and encourage and confirm their hope. "In this mountain the Lord of hosts hath made a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."—**ISA. xxv. 6.** This gospel feast is provided for *sons*, and he is a *son*; ergo, it is his right. "Eat, O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved," is the language of the master of the feast. In this mountain the "doctrine of the gospel is to drop as the rain, and the speech of the Almighty to distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass."—**DEUT. xxxii. 2.** With this, the saints are to be refreshed from season to season; and he is a saint, ergo, it is his right. The Lord's supper constitutes part of the banquet in this mountain, prepared by Jesus, the sinner's friend. At this banquet the household are often to meet, and be joyful together while they commemorate the death and passion of their divine Lord and Master. He is one of the household, ergo, it is his right. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell

together in unity."—PSALM, cxxxiii. 4. He is one of the brethren, ergo, he has a right to dwell in this house with them, and partake of the benefits thereof, which is his rest forever; "and here will he dwell, for he has desired it."—PSALM, cxxxii. 13. 14. *Glorious things are spoken of this house;* and here the stately steppings of the Lord are seen; his presence sweetly enjoyed; his love experienced, and his power felt by all those who have a name and a place in it; and a name and a place here is his right. The Lord has promised abundantly to bless the provision of this glorious house, this ZION, and to feed the poor with bread. "On the holy hill of Zion God has set his son."—PSALM, ii. 6. And there he is to reign as king. *A king shall reign in righteousness.* There he sways his peaceful sceptre, and makes his little hill a blessing; there it was anciently predicted the "horn of David should bud," and in it the gospel has gloriously and abundantly budded and blossomed. "There God commanded the blessing, even life forever more."—PSALM, cxxxiii. 3. And this life and peace are to continue as long as the sun; "Peace is to be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces."—PSALM, cxxii. 7. Christ Jesus, agreeably to ancient predictions, has come down by the gracious influences of his precious gospel, like "rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth;" while the righteous have flourished before him, and have stretched out their hand unto him; for he is their resting place, and to him the gathering of the people was to be, and his rest shall be glorious, "Yea, they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; the king of Tarshish, and of the Isles shall bring

presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts, yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.”—PSALM, lxxii. “The captivity of Jacob’s tents,” also are to be brought back, and pitched in this sacred hill, and “JUDAH shall be saved, and ISRAEL shall dwell safely.” And while the household of faith are praising, admiring, adoring and worshipping their precious Redeemer, Captain, King, Lord and Master, he will defend them, watch over them, feed them, be as a wall of fire round about them, and the glory in the midst of them; he will profusely scatter his blessings down among them, and “water them every moment; and lest any hurt them, he will keep them night and day.”

From this little hill shall a law go forth; (it has gone forth, and is now going forth) and the word of the Lord from this spiritual Jerusalem; and thrice-happy are all those who hear, know, and obey the joyful sound. The strictest intimacy is to be kept up between this glorious king and his subjects, and a constant intercourse kept open. The Holy Spirit diffuses his gracious influences abroad; and opens up unto them the everlasting, unbounded, and unchangeable love of the king; his eternal counsels, and the mystery of his cross; for his office is to “search all things, yea, the deep things of God.” Here their wants are to be supplied according to God’s riches in glory by Christ Jesus, while they in return, are to bring all their revenues to their Almighty King; fall down and worship him as the true God; and own him as their rightful sovereign. This king extends peace to them like a river, and in this river they lave and solace themselves; whilst he is unto them a

place of broad rivers and streams, which streams “watereth the ridges of Zion abundantly, settles the furrows thereof and make it soft, and cause the little hills to rejoice on every side.”—PSALM, lxv. All these things intimately concern the Christian we have been describing; to them he has an undoubted right.

Once more—as he has a right to the company of the saints, to a name and a place in the church militant, to all the immunities and privileges thereof; so also has he a right to the company of holy angels and glorified spirits, and to a name and a place in the church triumphant, and to all the glory and happiness in reversion at the right hand of God, and there finally to be enjoyed. There God is enjoyed without the least interruption; there a vast eternity will be spent in wonder, love and praise, and not the least vestige of sin be found throughout all that great dominion! The wicked there forever cease from troubling! There the once weary saints find, and enjoy perpetual rest! There with rapture and delight they behold him face to face, whom they used to view through a glass dimly. There in the highest sense of the word, is found but *one fold and one shepherd*; there the blood bought throng relate (in the simplicity of their hearts) to each other, long and pleasing stories of God’s great mercy, and great goodness manifested towards them when in a militant state; while they are uplifted with exceeding great joy, to think that what they once had in anticipation is now, through rich unmerited grace enjoyed in full fruition, never, no never to end! There is seen the very identical person! the once poor despised Nazarene, who died on the igno-

minious tree for SINNERS! but now the glorious, triumphant, matchless and adored JESUS, seated at the right hand of his Almighty Father, encircled with glory ineffable! There the high praises of Jehovah are sounded high on every string, while the vast expanse of heaven echoes and re-echoes the gladsome sound proceeding from the unnumbered millions redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, from every language, kindred, tongue, and nation under heaven! Not one jarring note is here to be heard! Their joys are one, their songs are one; and their language is so refined as far to exceed any ideas that we can form of it in this, our earthly state. There African slaves will shine in robes as glorious, bright, and glittering as kings, and the children of kings! and babes of a span long warble forth the praises of God in strains as lofty and melodious as the ancient Patriarchs; and those who were meanly treated by many while in a militant state, shall be rivaled by none. In a word—there, in one grand chorus, will the ANCIENT OF DAYS be adored, extolled, admired and praised through VAST ETERNITY! There mysteries are unravelled; there redeeming love shines forth in all its matchless glory and true lustre! There the merits of Christ the Lamb appear in their true colours, and are rightly appreciated! There the lovely face of HIM who now and then stands behind the wall while here below, and sometimes shews himself through the lattice, is seen without a cloud, or any kind of intervening object! There are no sins to deplore in these holy regions; no short comings to bewail; no tempting devil to dread; no snares to fear; no absent God to mourn; no cross to carry; no foes to com-

bat with; no crying, lo here! and lo there! but all is perfect peace and rest, and so shall ever be! What thinkest thou of all these things, O Christian? This place is thine by right; this happiness thou hast a good title unto. Fear not, then, the many dangers and difficulties which may attend thy path; heaven, which is thy right, will make amends for all. G! my dear brethren, if you are indeed what you profess to be, what large possessions are yours; how many great and glorious things are yours, and what grounds of encouragement ought these things to afford you? Surely you should not despair, or sink in your minds, but be thankful, humble, watchful, prayerful, vigilant, and hope unto the end. The dark glass through which you now see, will soon be broken, and then you will see eye to eye, and know even as you are known. "Be loving, and kindly affectionate one towards another;" pray often with and for one another; "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," who fulfilled the law for you, loved you, and gave himself for you, that you might not perish, but have everlasting life. O! be ye joyful together, and come into his presence with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; live as though this world was not your home, but as if you were hastening to a better country, that is to say, an heavenly; never forget your right; never lose sight of your privileges; and above all, never forget to own yourselves debtors to free and sovereign grace. But I proceed to shew,

THIRDLY.—The ground on which the Christian's right is founded. And first, negatively. It is not founded on any thing in himself, i. e. not on

any goodness foreseen in him by the Deity, to induce him to bestow such unbounded grace and mercy on him, and to grant him a right to all the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant, as heretofore described. For he, by nature and practice, is a sinner in common with the rest, "A child of wrath, even as others." There could, therefore, be nothing inherent in him more than in the common mass of mankind, to move the Almighty to show favour to him, while others are passed by. Neither is his right founded on the idea of his being more pliant, or his feelings more tender, so as to cause him to be easier wrought upon than others; for when God first chastised him, or corrected him for his sin and folly, he was "As a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke," and would fain have fled out of his hand or reach altogether. Neither is it on the ground of any good thing done by him, either before or after conversion, nor on the strength of his faith, though faith is God's gift, and the actings of faith are as much the productions of God as the gift is. Faith is fluctuating; sometimes weak, and sometimes strong; not so his right, for it is always one thing; no created power can alter it; it will remain his right forevermore. Finally, his right is not founded on any worth or worthiness in him, nor on any thing that God saw in him, or expected to find in him. But *positively* on the ground of God's loving him with an everlasting love, and choosing him in Christ his dear Son from all eternity. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." The sufferings and death of Christ flow from this source, viz. the love of God, and form part of the ground

on which his right is founded; out of pure love Jesus Christ suffered and died, and those who were interested in the everlasting love of God the Father, the Son died for. Indeed all the acts of Christ, as mediator of the covenant, even to his intercession now at the right hand of the Father, are included in this foundation; not as so many different grounds on which the believer's right is founded, but they are as so many constituent parts, making in the whole, one solid, ground foundation or basis; or as so many links in one chain, which are so admirably connected, and so firmly united we cannot separate them, and to attempt it, would be an insult to the great first cause of all things. This, then, is the ground on which the Christian's right is founded; and as this foundation standeth sure, so does his right. Now then, as God loved him (and still loves him) and out of love, chose him in Christ; and Christ, out of love suffered and died for him; rose again for him; and now intercedes for him, his pardon is sealed, peace proclaimed, and as he sees and knows that there is a sure foundation laid for him to build his hope of immortality and eternal life upon; well may he admire the wisdom of him *who has done all things well*, and be truly thankful for that grace which raised him from his low estate, to a comfortable hope of an interest in Christ Jesus the Lord. He has also a special regard to the work of the Holy Spirit; for by him, his mind has been illuminated, and the great plan of salvation revealed to him, and many of the deep things of God opened up to his view.

O! what a mercy it is that such a firm foundation is laid for us to build our hopes upon! Heav-

en and earth shall pass away, and rocks and mountains melt, still this foundation shall abide sure and firm. It has for its security the oath and promise of the Lord God Almighty; therefore, should storms of temptation, (more terrible than sevenfold thunders) beat furiously and threaten destruction, like the lava pouring from *Etna* and *Vesuvius* during an eruption, still shall it remain unshaken! Infidels may rage; impostors ridicule; and devils roar against it; yet it will stand; and stand it must, for it was laid by infinite wisdom, and is supported by Almighty power! Truly then we may triumph, rejoice and say, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed; and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. PSALM. xlvi. 1. 2. 3. If any have cause to be glad it is the Christian, whose hope is in God, and whose right is founded on this stable rock; and if any can come before God with confidence, it is he; and he ought to come in all the confidence of faith, with entire dependence on him who hath said, "Fear not, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." GEN. xv. 1. But I hasten—

FOURTHLY AND LASTLY—to speak particularly to the question in our text, "should I lie against my right?" It should here be remembered that a Christian is a compound of flesh and spirit; of nature and grace; of a law in his members, and a law in his mind. And on that part of the compound which is purely spiritual or heavenly, the Holy Spirit at times operates sweetly, at which

time the Christian subscribes with his hand unto the Lord, and cheerfully claims his right, to the honour of free grace and the glory of God; and on that part of the compound attached to the *old man*, Satan operates powerfully indeed. It is when the Christian is under this influence he is prone to "lie against his right." Thus is it owing to his being complex, that he is so inconsistent and self contradictory at times. With one of these parts, he serves the law of God, and with the other the law of sin; with one, he claims his right like a Christian; and with the other he often lies against it. And if this important and necessary distinction is not made, we shall never be able to account for his strange conduct and crooked proceedings through life. It is true he ought never to *lie against his right*, but owing to that sensual part of him, he is found so doing, so that what I shall say under this head respecting the Christian's lying against his right will no ways clash with what was said under our first head of discourse; *that* related to the part of the Christian which is spiritual or heavenly; *this* to the part which is sensual.

In attending to this last general head, I shall observe three things.

FIRST—What it is for a Christian to *lie against his right*.

SECOND—Why he should not do so.

THIRD—Wherein he does do it.

FIRST—When he gives way to his doubts and fears, and yields to unbelief, which his mind is sometimes full of, so that he refuses to *subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel*; whereas he ought to

do it, seeing his right stands on so good a foundation; this is *lying against his right*. If, from a deep sense of his own unworthiness, and from feeling much of the corruptions of his heart, and the dreadful pollution of his nature, he neglects to lay hold on the promises of God, which are unconditional, and all, yea, and amen in Christ Jesus, but puts them away, as having no claim on them; *he lies against his right*. If he keeps away from a throne of grace under any pretext whatever, *he lies against his right*.

Again—if he does not venture his soul on the Lord Jesus Christ, but stands aloof from him, and tries to shun him, or skulk out of his sight, as though he had no interest in him, *he lies against his right*. If he imagines he has no place in the affection of the brotherhood, no interest in their prayers, no right to their company, or to a seat in the house of God, and that he shall be shut out of heaven at last, and be banished to hell, there to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, because he is not an elect vessel of mercy, because he is not beloved of God, was not chosen in Christ from everlasting, because Christ did not die for him, rise again for him, and does not now intercede for him; if he imagines these things, and gives way to the wicked insinuations of Satan in this manner, he grievously *lies against his right*.

But, in the second place, why he ought not to do so. He ought not, for by so doing he sins against God, and wrongs his own soul. It is his duty to go to the Lord with his burden, his grief, and distress; let them be what they may, upon the strength of what the Lord has said, “Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I

will give you rest." But if he refuses to do so, and thus slightst the invitation given, and sets light on what is said to him by HIM who cannot lie, he sins against God, and wrongs his own soul. God has erected a throne of grace to hear when sinners cry, and has promised to meet them there, to bless them, and do them good; and if he keeps away out of fear that he shall not be heard, or obtain the blessing promised; he pours contempt on what the Lord has done; this he ought not to do—*should he lie against his right?*

If he confers with flesh and blood, consults carnal reason, and harkens to the suggestions of Satan, instead of the voice of God, and giving full credit to what he, in his holy word has said, in matters of soul concern, he sins against God, and wrongs himself.

God is not only glorified and honoured, but great peace and comfort are obtained by the Christian when he claims his right, and attends to the many privileges conferred on him by the Lord of hosts; whereas, if these things are neglected and looked over, he sins against God, and wrongs his own soul, which he ought not to do—*should he lie against his right?* If "God has given unto us great and precious promises, that by them we might be partakers of the divine nature," and yet he rejects them from a pretence that they are not for him, he is not worthy of them, he is too great a sinner, &c. &c. This is wrong; it is unwarrantable conduct, dishonouring to God and his word.

If God has given unto us *all* things that pertain to life and godliness, so that *all* things are ours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or

things to come, *all* are ours;" and yet he, through the power of unbelief, fancies himself destitute of *all* these things, and quite shut out from divine regard, he sins against God, and wrongs his own soul. But he ought not so to do—*should he lie against his right?*

If our safe arrival in heaven is secured by the oath and promise of the Lord, yet he concludes he shall perish forever, he sins against God; but he ought not so to do—*should he lie against his right?* If the children of Israel, after they were brought by the Lord of hosts into the Land of Promise, had thought, or said they were not brought there, merely because the Canaanites dwelt among them, they, by so doing, would certainly have dishonoured God, and wronged themselves. And so would the Christian, while in this world of sin and sorrow, if he should think he is not a partaker of the grace of God, nor has any share in the privileges of the gospel dispensation, which, in part, was shadowed out by the land of Canaan. Again—if he gives up his privileges, and neglects those duties which are incumbent on him, under an idea that to attend to them would be presumptuous and arrogant; for if they did belong to him, and he had a just claim on them, his feelings would be different from what they are, his love to God greater, his faith stronger, his heart softer, his mind more spiritual, his corruptions weaker, and his foes fewer, &c. he sins against God, and wrongs his own soul; but he ought not so to do—*should he lie against his right?*

But there are other reasons why he ought not to lie against his right. It is underrating that which God would have him prize highly. The

blessed Lord has seen fit to set a high estimation on the right conferred on him, a poor unworthy creature; and by rating it lower than the doner has thought proper to do, he sins against God and wrongs his own soul. Again it is setting a bad example before the household of faith, and often proves a matter of discouragement to the weak among them.

When they see him persisting in lying against what they believe to be his right; their minds are hurt; they are grieved exceedingly, for they know that God thereby is dishonoured; he, therefore, ought not so to do—*should he lie against his right?* By living and acting in this way, he becomes worldly and carnally minded, and the less tender in his conscience as to what he says or does, and hence he will be apt to speak unadvisedly with his tongue, which will cause the enemies of the cross to pour the greater contempt on the good things and ways of the Lord, and induce them to think and say, there is nothing real in religion. Hence they cry, “Behold! here is a man who once made a flaming profession of religion; but now we can see little or no difference between him and ourselves.” Surely he ought to guard against these things and not give the enemy cause to say “Aha! thus would we have it.” But farther, it is very hurtful to young Christians, particularly to such whose eyes have just been opened to see their danger, and are seeking the right way, or enquiring how they shall be saved. Now, if such should see one whom they supposed to be strong in the faith giving glory to God, live and act as though he had no faith, as though there was nothing in the religion of the blessed Jesus to be

depended on; nothing to support a soul in the hour of distress and trouble; O! how it would weaken their hands and distress their souls; for they are generally like lambs, timid, shy and fearful. This sight therefore, aggravates in a measure all their distresses, and creates fresh doubts and fears. This being the case, he ought not so to do—“Should he lie against his right!”

THIRDLY.—Although the Christian by lying against his right, sins against God, sets a bad example before the household of faith, causes the enemies of the cross to speak reproachfully of the good ways of God, weakens the hands of young converts, and wrongs his own soul; yet, sad to tell, he is often found guilty of this capital offence, which is what we have now to attend to.

The Christian then instead of subscribing with his hand unto the Lord, as he ought to do, it being his right, is often writing better things against himself. Thus, “I shall go to the gates of the grave. I am deprived of the residue of my years. I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living. My age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd’s tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me?” ISA. xxviii. 1. 2. 3. This hasty conclusion is drawn in the midst of a violent storm, which ruffles his mind and makes him almost frantic; and while he is proceeding without the light of the sun, and with no small tempest beating on him, he says many perverse things, which increases his distress. This terrible blast sweeps away his former confidence in God, and he is left like a sparrow alone upon the

house top, while he stands astonished at his situation, and trembles at his fate. During this trembling fit, he speaks unadvisedly, for he says “He has fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my path. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone, and my hope hath he removed like a tree. He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and counted me unto him as one of his enemies.

JOB. xix. 8—11.

Now, although his situation is truly doleful, yet he is wrong in drawing such conclusions, since blessed mornings of deliverance commonly succeed long and dark nights of trouble; and no case on this side of hell is so deplorable but what God’s mercy can relieve from it. In this hurricane he is tempted to believe his condition is singular, and peculiar to rebels against God, for unto such as fear and love him, Christ is said to be a “hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest;” whereas he is exposed to the tempest from morn until night, and all hope of his being saved seems to be taken away. Look which way he may all is gloomy, while the storm appears to thicken, and threaten to dash him to pieces, every moment, like a potter’s vessel; and he is so tossed to and fro by the billows, that he can no more “subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel,” than he can cause the storm to cease; the most he can do is to *lie against his right*, and at this he is quite expert; the Lord, however, who rides upon the storm, and manages all things well, and who is better to him than all his fears, causes,

in his own good time, the storm to cease, and brings him to a quiet resting place, where he finds himself safe, and he is constrained to cry out, "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble."

—NAHAM, i. 7. And indeed, as long as his right is within reach of sense and feeling, all is well with him. But if God, for wise purposes, or ends, best known to himself, is pleased to open to his view some of the great abominations of his heart, and depths of iniquity there, and bring him to know more of himself, and the treachery of his heart, O! how is he appalled, and put to it. He begins to lose sight of his right. He finds it hard work to come *boldly* to a throne of grace; or, indeed, to come at all. If he confesses his sins to God, he is overpowered by new discoveries of others, which arise to his view. In fact, the plague of his heart runs so high, his sins appear so foul and black, that a query presents itself, "can it be possible that I ever was renewed in the spirit of my mind; ever a subject of divine grace; a partaker of the divine nature, restored to the favour of God, or the object of his love? If it were the case, should I feel as I now feel?" He is burdened with sin, bowed down with its weight, and is sickened at the very sight of his situation. Instead of being holy, as those must needs be in whom a principle of holiness is planted; he is unholy and all defiled with sin. Instead of being happy, he is wretched. Instead of being engaged in the solemn exercise of prayer, his confusion and trouble are so great, he is afraid to look up. Instead of fellowship with Jesus, he is tormented with sin and Satan. Instead of triumphing over Satan and his own corruptions, in the strength and

name of the Lord of hosts, they are triumphing over him. Thus by reasoning in this way, judging by his own feelings and consulting with flesh and blood, he is almost ready to conclude he is not the person he once thought and hoped he was, and therefore cannot have any just right to the privileges of the saints; and although he is better informed than to expect perfection in this life, so as to be entirely free from sin and out of the reach of Satan's temptations, or that the saints of God are not exercised thus, yet it is amazing to think how he is foiled when his faith and his religion are brought to the test. His better judgment in a trying day, when the iniquity of his heels compasseth him about, and Satan closely besieges him, becomes a mere wreck, and he is as unstable as water. He labours hard to resist Satan, and suppress the rising corruptions of his heart, but all in vain! Alas! they are stronger than he is; under them he falls, and then "lies against his right," which serves to strengthen the evils of his heart, and accord with the wishes of Satan: while he strives against sin and Satan, but strives in vain! his mind at times is filled with rebellion, and most blasphemous thoughts arise, so that he is almost ready to curse God and die. He would now be glad to change situations with the weakest of the saints of Jesus, who is enjoying peace in believing, or indeed with any one who is not tormented as he is. He is ready to conclude that his situation is worse now than it was before he made any profession of religion. O! how unhappy is he in his mind; and so he will continue to be, until God comes and undoes all that afflicts him. But great and many are his fears that this will never take

place, for it seems to him to be almost impossible for such disorder to be corrected, and his soul again to enjoy peace and rest. But I proceed,

While the Christian is thus distressed—with his sins, linked like a chain to his soul, his iniquities arranged in view before him, and Satan closely pursuing him, injecting vile and blasphemous thoughts into his mind, and trying to sink him in despair, he, poor thing, “measures himself by himself,” and judges of his eternal state by what he feels, instead of looking to HIM who saves to the uttermost, and whose blood cleanses from all sin. He would, however, at times fain venture himself on Christ, but his fears, and a wicked heart of unbelief drive him away. He tries sometimes to lay hold on the promises, but he is so enfeebled by a continual sight and sense of his sins, that his hand trembles so much, he cannot touch them. At his weakness Satan rejoices, and presents many pleasing baits in order wholly to seduce him from the right way; and it is surprising to think what access he has to his heart. But what is pleasing to tell, and mortifying to the enemy, he finds that in the Christian’s mind there is a great struggle, a kind of conflict; there is something that seems at all times to adhere to Christ and his atonement, to the promises, and HIM who made them; and this part of the Christian turns a deaf ear to what Satan says; nay, is proof against seduction; it is all for God, for Christ, for grace and mercy, and for heaven at last. Satan finding this to be the case, roars like a lion, and would give all this world, which he calls his own, if it were not so, for with this part of the Christian he can do but little. The part on which he can act

is that which is most like himself. Thus he may worry him, annoy him, help forward his calamities, and get him to *lie against his right*; but he cannot, with all his cunning, destroy him, for his “life is hid with Christ in God,” and in God’s time he shall come out of this furnace also; for all that is intended by this trial is to show him what is in his heart, and what little cause he has to trust it, and also what great need there is for him to look to, and depend on HIM who is able to deliver from the greatest danger. And sure I am he will gain much by trading in these deep waters for when he is brought through he will much more prize the hand that sustained him when ready to sink, than if he had never been in circumstances to need such marvellous aid. Though he, to his own hurt, and to the dishonour of God, *lied against his right* when in trouble; yet, when delivered, he will prize it higher than ever. O! what a beauty does he now see in Jesus Christ, what sweetness in a throne of grace, how delicious the promises, how comforting and reviving the society of the saints, how he values a place in the house of God, and with what divine rapture does he anticipate the joys of the world to come!

But again—perhaps the next calamity which overtakes him will be SLOTH and COLDNESS. This state of mind, it may be, steals upon him unawares, and he becomes quite torpid and supine before he knows that there is any thing the matter with him. Now, generally speaking, this condition of soul is attended with much lying against ones right, and is the most dangerous state for the Christian to be in.—Hence says the poet: —

“ ‘Tis more the treacherous calm I dread,  
Than tempest bursting o’er my head.”

After he has been delivered from the danger he feared and dreaded from a fresh view of the evils of his heart, his strength is considerably renewed, and his confidence in his God increased, so that none dare to make him afraid. On Christ he builds his hope; of him he makes his boast, and in him he rejoices all the day long, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The enemy sees his situation, for he is always on the alert, watches his opportunity, and gradually, and under cover makes his approach unto him, so that he is not perceived by the unsuspecting Christian. The object of this subtle assailant is to bring him into a state of lethargy and then make him his prey. Christ saith, “The thief cometh not but to steal, and to kill and to destroy.” JOHN, x. 40. And so here, the design of this assailant is to steal away his heart from Christ, to mar his comforts, to weaken his confidence in God, to raise doubts and fears in his mind, to get him to “lie against his right,” and fret against his Lord and Master. As he is particularly opposed to prayer, and seeing the Christian closely engaged in this exercise, and well knowing that nothing to purpose can be done by him while this is the case, he endeavours to weaken his hands, and cause him to relax in this his privilege, by telling him, that it is not necessary for him now to be engaged at a throne of grace so often as heretofore, as he is now in possession of the comfort he was seeking after. Or, on the other hand, he suggests the idea of his making a Saviour of this duty to the neglect of Christ. Or perhaps, while the Christian is in the act of prayer

he presents various objects of a carnal nature before him, sometimes such as are very pleasing to flesh and blood, and well calculated to charm his heart, and enveigle his affections; at other times, such as are of a diabolical nature, and well adapted to confuse his mind, derange his thoughts, and damp his zeal; and if by any of these plans he gains his point, the throne of grace, which to him was delightsome, will gradually be neglected, and wear a gloomy aspect; prayer also become burdensome, until it is finally neglected, and communion with God declines with it, while his heart becomes cold, his affections greatly withdrawn from God, and inattention to all religious exercises ensues. Soon, however, the poor Christian finds something is wrong, that it is not with him as in months past, he labours now to collect his scattered thoughts, to buckle on his armour, make an assault on the assailant, and retrieve his lost comfort; his enemy, aware of his intentions, prepares for an attack, and is ready to give him battle at a moment's warning; and indeed, before the Christian is ready, the arch fiend discharges from his artillery a most destructive volley of hard thoughts against God, which so weakens his faith, and damps his courage, that he secretly cries out, "My strength and my hope are perished from the Lord."—LAM. iii. 18. But recovering himself a little, he again tries to pray, but his mind is so dark and confused he cannot arrange his thoughts, and he finds but little or no comfort in the exercise. By this time, a long train of calamities are brought upon him, such as, no warm affections going out after God as he once had; little or no love to the household of faith; no pleasure in at-

tending to the means of grace; no relish for the precious promises; no desire for prayer; no delight in reading the scriptures, the word of truth; no wish to enter into spiritual conversation; but all is dark, dreary, waste, desolate and wild. In this gloomy situation he looks around him, and seeing no prospect of things being better, he begins to conclude in his mind he may as well give up all, for he has no right to the Christian name; no right to subscribe with his hand unto the Lord; no right to the throne of grace; no right to the promises; no right to Christ; no right to the love and fellowship of the saints; no right to an interest in their prayers, or their liberality; no right to a name and a place in the house of God; and consequently, no right to the New Jerusalem above. Thus does he in good earnest, *lie against his right*; and this is what Satan wished to get him at.

He is now in a bad plight indeed, his singing days are over, his harp is hung upon the willow, and he looks back with regret on the happy days and months which are gone; he goes to the house of God, but returns empty; he goes to a throne of grace, but comes away with his countenance sad; he reads the Bible, but alas! all is dark, and the word on which he was once enabled to hope is forgotten by him; he struggles hard to come forth, but all in vain; he endeavours to draw comfort from past experience, but his unsanctified memory fails him; he therefore draws the same conclusion as before, viz.—That he is no Christian, nor has any right to the privileges of a Christian. In this way he goes on for some time, at length a lethargic spirit gets fast hold of him, and he becomes indifferent about his state, or how things go

with him. His affections, which before were lively and strong, and flowed out freely toward the divine Redeemer, are now cold, inactive, and almost dead. Indeed, as the Holy Spirit has withdrawn his benign influences, the poor Christian's faith, hope, love and zeal, with every other grace, loudly proclaim a dreary winter at hand. That which before to him appeared lovely and pleasant, and to which he attended with pleasure and delight, have now no charms for him; for the gloom of winter seems to have swallowed up the beauty of the past summer! And while going on in this wretched way, he is miserable beyond description. Yet he has no heart earnestly to beseech the Almighty to turn again his captivity, for his strength is devoured by the blast of winter; and it may be said of him as it was said of Ephraim and Israel, "Strangers have devoured his strength and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not: and the pride of Israel testifieth to his face, and they do not return unto the Lord their God, nor seek him for all this." Hos. vii. 9. 10. This is truly a wretched state to be in, for the ways of God are now irksome unto him instead of being pleasant; and he is ready to say at times, "It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it, that I keep his ordinances, and that I have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts." MAL. iii. 14. Now this is basely lying against his right, which he ought not to do, seeing that the change in his condition or state of mind, cannot effect his right, or alter in the smallest degree the foundation on which it rests. I therefore consider myself warranted from scripture, to *vindicate it*, even while he, through the power of unbelief, is lying against it.

But again, there is at times, a struggle in his mind, which proves that the graces of the Holy Spirit in his soul are not extinct, though at a low ebb, and very feeble. He makes some effort to come forth from his confinement and claim his right; but through the power of his enemy, he cannot accomplish his object. The enemy now stirs him up to envy the happiness of other Christians, and thence rebel against God, so that he frets and murmurs against the dealings of the Lord towards him, and in him is fulfilled this saying, "The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord." PROV. xix. 3. Jealously is said to be as cruel as the grave; and while the Christian is viewing the happiness of others, and mourning over his own wretched condition, he realizes the truth of it, and is as unhappy in his mind as he well can be, and in this state he will remain until God is pleased, either by judgments or mercies, to rouse him from it, and again bring him to his right mind. Until this be the case, he will *lie against his right*, in opposition to all we can say or do by way of *vindicating it*.

Thus, my beloved, have I attended to the four propositions laid down at the beginning of this discourse; and from what has been advanced, you may see what sort of a creature a Christian is, when set forth in his complex character. But alas! how few among the great crowd of professing Christians are there in this day who know anything about what I have now delivered unto you. But I fondly hope and trust you know something of it; and may I not confidently hope the few remarks made may prove in season to you all?

Remember, my beloved, we are in an enemy's country at present, which urges the necessity of our being constantly on our watch tower, lest Satan get the advantage over us, so far as to cause us to *lie against our right*. It is true, we cannot keep ourselves; but we ought to wait upon HIM who is able to keep us, and who will be with us in six troubles, and in the seventh not forsake us.

The world is very ensnaring, my brethren, and we see many who once made a profession of religion, ensnared by it, and carried away by its bewitching charms. It is, therefore, needful for us to *watch*. Satan also is sly, and very crafty; ever ready to seduce our souls, and debauch our minds; and not a few amongst us have been carried off by his seductions, and, for a time, been mournfully situated. It becomes us, therefore, to *watch*. Our hearts too, are deceitful, and not to be trusted in; and yet we find the most of us are foolish enough to do so, though it is said, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Against this evil we should therefore *watch*.

We have great need also to watch and pray against the spirit of the times, for there are many false spirits out in the world, and they all assume a religious garb, and in this way thousands among us are deceived. The cry sounding daily in our ears is, "In order to become respectable, popular and prosperous in religion, we must, in outward things, be like other nations, for if we do not cut a figure in this polite age we shall be despised, ridiculed, and pointed at by the genteel part of the community; as was the case with Christ and his apostles. We must, therefore, endeavour to

wipe off the reproach, in order to induce men to come among us, that their souls may be converted."

Thus, my beloved brethren, the simplicity of the gospel, and plain truth, are eclipsed by the dark cloud of pride and popularity, which has gathered thick around us. If not wholly eclipsed, it has become but a secondary consideration. Popularity leads the van, and *truth mangled* brings up the rear, or is adverted to for a cloak to screen from the glare of day, a *false spirit*. Is there not, therefore, great cause for us to keep a double watch against this *infernal delusion*? It is an awful time in which we live, and a future day will make it manifest, "For from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land, they speak a vision of their own hearts," when they tell us of such fine things, of so much good done, and of Zion's being in such a prosperous state. From all the observations which I have made, I am convinced to the contrary. It is indeed a melancholy truth, that Zion is now under a cloud, and things are not with her as they are generally represented to us. There is, indeed, a great tumult in the world, as Ahimaaz said, on another occasion, "But there are but few that know what it mean."—2 SAM. xviii 29.

Erroneous men are said, by the apostle Paul, to "lie in wait to deceive."

*Lie in wait.* Watching an opportunity to poison the minds of men by their false doctrine, and to subvert the gospel of Christ.

*Lie in wait.* Seeking a proper time to come forth upon unstable souls; to appear in disguise, and with fair pretences to flatter, inveigle and be-

witch the sons of men; to speak ambiguously, or to say one thing and mean another, and deal out falsehood as they think will best suit the persons they address, or as their minds will bear it. They will be careful at the first on-set, to keep back the more grosser part of their errors, until they have prepared their minds by things more refined and less suspicious; and as soon as things are in a state of readiness, these deceivers, these liars in ambush, come forth openly, and make manifest to the children of light that they are not of God, but “Deceivers, false apostles, evil workers, men of corrupt minds, &c.”

Now, as Paul calls *truth* sound doctrine, good doctrine, doctrine of God, doctrine of Christ, and doctrine according to godliness, &c. so on the other hand, he calls *error* doctrine of men, doctrine of devils, and strange doctrines.—And when he speaks of various errors, this is his mode of expression, “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every *wind of doctrine*;” so that we see Paul displays as much divine wisdom in giving suitable names to *true* and *false* doctrines as Adam did in giving proper names to all the living creatures which God brought to him when in the garden of Eden.

As the above deceivers are said to *lie in wait*, so the doctrine they design to disseminate, as soon as opportunity offers, is called *wind*, which is a borrowed figure, and fitly sets forth false doctrine.

FIRST. *Wind* is liable to change, and to blow from different directions; nor can we with all our wit tell from whence it will come next.

And so it is with error; it assumes different shapes and forms; sometimes it appears very plau-

sible and specious; at another time more abstruse and mysterious. It also comes frequently from a quarter we little expected, and comes with great violence, so that men are tossed to and fro with it. And as all winds come from the heavens so all errors and false doctrines come from the devil, who is said to be the *prince and power of the air*; and it is this air, or false doctrine, that infatuates and poisons the minds of men.

**SECONDLY.** *Wind* cannot be seen; so error is not seen, nor known to be so baneful as it is, by men who are blind and carnal, sold under sin; and hence it is they are so liable to be imposed on by men who *lie in wait to deceive*. And the Christian, for the want of clearer light, is often misled by these *liars in wait*, but he shall be reclaimed, because he belongs to the household of faith, as we read, “They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.”—ISA. xxix. 24. But of the rest, at least many of them, it is thus written, “And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.”—ISA. viii. 15.

**THIRDLY.** *Wind* is irresistible; men cannot stop its progress, or turn it from its course. And so error; men, of themselves, cannot stem its torrent. When error comes in, as it often does, like a flood, it requires a God to lift up a standard against it, so as to arrest it in its course. Men who think their judgments proof against error, little imagine how powerful its influence is.

**FOURTHLY.** *Wind* tosses things about, and turns them topsy turvy; and men by error are tossed and turned in like manner; turned from truth,

turned from God, turned topsy turvy, tossed to and fro, so that at last they call darkness light, and light darkness; and put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. They are also said to be bewitched, made drunk, and to "run greedily after the error of Balaam."

**FIFTHLY.** *Wind* is very searching and penetrating; it enters where nothing else can. And so error; it will, and does search and try the children of God, and proves often who are on the Lord's side, and who are not; hence it is said, "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest." And this we often see verified. Error also will find its way, and gain admittance where truth dares not come. Error gets rooted in the heart while truth is shut out with disdain. Men will look upon error, and be pleased with its appearance, while they shut their eyes, ears, hearts, pockets and doors against truth, by which we are made free. Men love darkness rather than light; error rather than truth; a false Christ rather than the true God. So it was in the beginning, so it is now, and so it will be, till God makes a change for the better, which the Lord grant may be the case soon.

**SIXTHLY.** *Wind* often does much mischief, and makes great devastation in the land. And so error; it does much mischief both abroad and at home, it disquiets men's minds, distracts churches; breaks the inward peace of the Christian; drives men wild and mad; they are mad upon their idols we are told. It makes great destruction also; men are destroyed by error, both body and soul. And how many tall, flourishing, zealous and flaming

professors have been brought down and destroyed by this wind of error; and this wind is now blowing very vehemently from many quarters.

Men, wicked men, ungodly men, erroneous men, men of corrupt minds are in this our day, in this our country, in this our state, and in this our city, *lying in wait to deceive*; so that we beloved stand in need of Paul's dehortation; it is quite seasonable, and we should do well were we to take heed thereunto.

Beloved, we live in an evil day, a day of great declension, a great falling away from the truth and simplicity of the gospel. Men are lovers of themselves, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God and truth. We have but few men among us, yea, so few that a "child may write them." ISA. x. 19. that are valiant for truth. We have another gospel introduced amongst us, which is not another, as Paul says, but there be some that trouble us, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

There are great divisions also among many, of whom we would wish better things; and this ought to cause great searchings of heart among ourselves, lest a perverse spirit should mingle itself with us and some be carried away *after the error of Balaam*.

Beloved I hope you will ever manifest a warm attachment to truth and adorn the doctrine of your God and Saviour in all things.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end.—AMEN.

















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